

Eek drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
Thus shal I seyn, and that his cowarde herte
Made him amis the goddes text to glose,
Whan he for ferde out of his Delphos sterte.
And but I make him sone to converte,
And doon my reed withinne a day or tweye,
I wol to yow oblige me to deye.

And troweliche, as writen wel I finde,
That al this thing was seyde of good entente;
And that hir herte trewe was and kinde
Towardes him, and spak right as she mente,
And that she starf for wo neigh, whan she wente,
And was in purpos ever to be trewe;
Thus writen they that of hir werkes knewe.

This Troilus, with herte and eres spradde,
Herde al this thing devysen to and fro;
And verraylich him semed that he hadde
The selve wit; but yet to lete hir go
His herte misforayf him evermo.
But fynally, he gan his herte wreste
To trusten hir, and took it for the beste.

for which the grete furie of his penaunce
Was queynt with hope, and therewith hem bitwene
Bigan for joye the amoureuse daunce.
And as the briddes, whan the sonne is shene,
Delyten in hir song in leves grene,
Right so the wordes that they spake yfere
Delyted hem, and made hir hertes clere.

But natheles, the wending of Criseyde,
for al this world, may nought out of his minde;
for which ful ofte he pitously hir preyde,
That of hir heste he might hir trewe finde.
And seyde hir: Certes, if ye be unkinde,
And but ye come at day set into Troye,
Ne shal I never have hele, honour, ne joye.

for also sooth as sonne uprist on morwe,
And, God! so wisly thou me, woful wrecche,
To reste bringe out of this cruel sorwe,
I wol myselfen slee if that ye drecche.
But of my deeth though litel be to recche,
Yet, er that ye me cause so to smerte,
Dwel rather here, myn owene swete herte!

for trewely, myn owene lady dere,
Tho sleightes yet that I have herd yow stene
ful shaply been to failen alle yfere,
for thus men seyn: That oon thenketh the bere,
But al another thenketh his ledere.
Your sire is wys, and seyde is, out of drede:
Men may the wyse at renne, and not at rede.

It is ful hard to halten unespyed
Bifore a crepul, for he can the craft;
Your fader is in sleighte as Argus yed;
for al be that his moeble is him biraft,
His olde sleighte is yet so with him laft,
Ye shal not blende him for your womanhede,
Ne feyne aright, and that is al my drede.

I noot if pees shal evermo bityde;
But, pees or no, for ernest ne for game,
I woot, sin Calkas on the Grekes syde
Hath ones been, and lost so foule his name,
He dar no more come here ayein for shame;
for which that weye, for ought I can espye,
To trusten on, nis but a fantasye.

Ye shal eek seen, your fader shal yow glose
To been a wyf, and as he can wel preche,
He shal som Grek so preyse and wel alose,
That ravisschen he shal yow with his speche,
Or do yow doon by force as he shal teche.
And Troilus, of whom ye nil han routhe,
Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe!

And over al this, your fader shal despyse
As alle, and seyn this citee nis but lorn;
And that thassege never shal aryse,
for why the Grekes han it alle sworn
Til we be slayn, and doun our walles torn.
And thus he shal you with his wordes fere,
That ay drede I, that ye wol bleve there.

Ye shul eek seen so many a lusty knight
Among the Grekes, ful of worthinesse,
And eche of hem with herte, wit, and might
To plesen yow don al his besinesse,
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of us sely Troianes, but if routhe
Remorde yow, or vertue of your trouthe.

And this to me so grevous is to thinke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende;
Ne dredeles, in me ther may not sinke
A good opinioun, if that ye wende;
for why your faderes sleighte wol us shende,
And if ye goon, as I have told yow yore,
So thenk I nam but deed, withoute more.

for which, with humble, trewe, and pitous herte,
A thousand tymes mercy I yow preyde;
So reweth on myn aspre peynes smerte,
And doth somewhat, as that I shal yow seye,
And lat us stele away bitwix us tweye;
And thenk that folye is, whan man may chese,
for accident his substaunce ay to lese.

I mene this, that sin we mowe er day
Wel stele away, and been togider so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
In cas ye sholden to your fader go,
If that ye mighte come ayein or no?
Thus mene I, that it were a gret folye
To putte that sikernes in jupartye.

And vulgarly to speken of substaunce
Of tresour, may we bothe with us lede
Ynough to live in honour and plesaunce,
Til into tyme that we shul ben dede;
And thus we may eschewen al this drede.
for everich other wey ye can recorde,
Myn herte, ywis, may not therwith acorde.

And hardily, ne dredeth no poverté,
for I have kin and freendes elleswhere
That, though we comen in our bare sherte,
As sholde neither lakke gold ne gere,
But been honoured whyl we dwelten there.
And go we anon, for, as in myn entente,
This is the beste, if that ye wole assente.

Criseyde, with a syk, right in this wyse
Answerde: Ywis, my dere herte trewe,
We may wel stele away, as ye devyse,
And finde swiche unthrifty weyes newe;
But afterward, ful sore it wol us rewe.
And help me God so at my moste nede
As causeles ye suffren al this drede!

for thilke day that I for cherissinge
Or drede of fader, or of other wight,
Or for estat, delyt, or for weddinge
Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnes doughter, Juno, thorough hir might,
As wood as Athamante do me dwelle
Eternaly in Stix, the put of helle!

And this on every god celestial
I swere it yow, and eek on eche goddessse,
On every Nympe and deite infernal,
On Satyr and fauny more and lesse,
That halve goddes been of wildernesse;
And Attropos my threed of lyf tobreste
If I be fals; now trowe me if thou leste!

And thou, Simois, that as an arwe clere
Thorough Troye rennest ay downward to the see,
Ber witnessse of this word that seyde is here,
That thilke day that ich untrew be
To Troilus, myn owene herte free,
That thou retorne bakwarde to thy welle,
And I with body and soule sinke in helle!

But that ye speke, away thus for to go
And leten alle your freendes, God forbede,
for any womman, that ye sholden so,
And namely, sin Troye hath now swich nede
Of help; and eek of o thing taketh hede,
If this were wist, my lif laye in balaunce,
And your honour; God shilde us fro mischaunce!

And if so be that pees hereafter take,
As alday happeth, after anger, game,
Why, Lord! the sorwe and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne dorste come ayein for shame!
And er that ye juparten so your name,
Beth nought to hasty in this hote fare;
for hasty man ne wanteth never care.

What trowe ye the peple eek al aboute
Wolde of it seye? It is ful light to arede.
They wolden seye, and swere it, out of doute,
That love ne droof yow nought to doon this dede,
But lust voluptuous and coward drede.
Thus were al lost, ywis, myn herte dere,
Your honour, which that now shyneth so clere.

And also thenketh on myn honestee,
That floureth yet, how foule I sholde it shende,
And with what filthe it spotted sholde be,
If in this forme I sholde with yow wende.
Ne though I livede unto the worldes ende,
My name sholde I never ayeinward winne;
Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and sinne.

And forthy slee with reson al this hete;
Men seyn, The suffraunt overcometh, pardee;
Eek Whoso wol han leef, he leef mot lete;
Thus maketh vertue of necessitee
By pacience, and thenk that lord is he
Of fortune ay, that nought wol of hir recche;
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche.

And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Er Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Leoun passe out of this Ariete,
I wol ben here, withouten any wene.
I mene, as helpe me Juno, hevenes quene,
The tenthe day, but if that deeth me assaile,
I wol yow seen, withouten any fayle.

And now, so this be sooth, quod Troilus,
I shal wel suffre unto the tenthe day,
Sin that I see that nede it moot be thus.
But, for the love of God, if it be may,
So lat us stele prively away;
for ever in oon, as for to live in reste,
Myn herte seyth that it wol been the beste.

O mercy, God, what lyf is this? quod she;
Alas, ye slee me thus for verray tene!
I see wel now that ye mistrusten me;
for by your wordes it is wel ysene.
Now, for the love of Cynthis the shene,
Mistrust me not thus causeles, for routhe;
Sin to be trewe I have yow plight my trouthe.

And thenketh wel, that som tyme it is wit
To spende a tyme, a tyme for to winne;
Ne, pardee, lorn am I nought fro yow yit,
Though that we been a day or two atwinne.
Dryf out the fantasyes yow withinne;
And trusteth me, and leveth eek your sorwe,
Or here my trouthe, I wol not live til morwe.

for if ye wiste how sore it doth me smerte,
Ye wolde cesse of this; for God, thou wost,
The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte,
To see yow wepen that I love most,
And that I moot gon to the Grekes ost.
Ye, nere it that I wiste remedye
To come ayein, right here I wolde dye!

But certes, I am not so nyce a wight
That I ne can imaginen a way
To come ayein that day that I have bight.
for who may holde thing that wol away?
My fader nought, for al his queynste pley.
And by my thrift, my wending out of Troye
Another day shal tome us alle to joye.